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New York

President:	Sir Jeremy Greenstock	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Petrella
	Bahrain	Mr. Buallay
	Brazil	Mr. Fonseca
	Canada	Mr. Fowler
	China	Mr. Chen Xu
	France	Mr. Dejammet
	Gabon	Mr. Ebouny
	Gambia	Mr. Jagne
	Malaysia	Mr. Mohammad Kamal
	Namibia	Mr. Andjaba
	Netherlands	Mr. van Walsum
	Russian Federation	Mr. Granovsky
	Slovenia	Mr. Türk
	United States of America	Ms. Soderberg

Agenda

The situation in East Timor

00-22123

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The meeting was called to order at 11.30 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in East Timor

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Hédi Annabi, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Annabi to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations on the situation concerning East Timor.

I should like to draw the attention of members of the Council to document S/1999/1248, letter dated 14 December 1999 from the Secretary-General transmitting a letter dated 10 December 1999 from the Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations and the fifth periodic report on the operations of the International Force, East Timor (INTERFET).

I now call on Mr. Annabi, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

Mr. Annabi: I should like to begin this briefing on the situation concerning East Timor with an expression of deep appreciation to the Governments that participated in the donor conference held in Tokyo on 16-17 December. That conference was, in our view, very successful. Pledges were made amounting to a total of $522 million, covering humanitarian assistance, administration and capacity-building for self-government and reconstruction and development. The timely disbursement of these funds will ensure that the United Nations will have the resources required for the large and complex tasks it has undertaken in East Timor. We are most grateful for this support, and I think a special word of appreciation is due to the Government of Japan, which made a significant contribution to the success of the conference, both as host of the conference and as a major donor.

The preparations for the Tokyo conference involved exceptionally close cooperation between the United Nations and ita agencies and programmes, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and, of course, the representatives of the people of East Timor.

Turning to the security situation, the situation has remained largely stable. There have been isolated cases of verbal and sometimes physical abuse of returning refugees on the grounds that they had supported autonomy rather than independence during the popular consultation, but no serious casualties have resulted. The fighters of FALANTIL remain in their cantonment area at Aileu, from where some minor incidents of indiscipline have been reported.

The military observers of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) are deployed throughout the territory and have also set up 11 liaison posts on both sides of the border with West Timor to ensure appropriate liaison between the International Force, East Timor (INTERFET) and the Indonesian armed forces and to facilitate the return of refugees.

The planning for the establishment of UNTAET's military component is proceeding in close consultation with INTERFET. The transition from INTERFET to the United Nations is to take place during the month of February, from the beginning to the end of that month, on the basis of an agreed concept that will ensure that a strong operational capacity will be maintained throughout. While much of UNTAET's force will come from INTERFET, a number of important assets will need to be brought in from abroad. These include, in particular, engineering units and helicopter support. The Force Commander, as the Secretary-General has announced, will be an officer from the Philippines and the Deputy Force Commander will be an officer from Australia.

Turning now to the return of refugees and the humanitarian situation, globally the humanitarian situation has improved, although it remains very difficult in the wake of the extensive destruction that took place following the announcement of the results of the popular consultation. The coordination of humanitarian relief activities among United Nations agencies, government

agencies and non-governmental organizations has been very effective.

Ensuring the voluntary return of refugees remains a top priority of UNTAET. As of yesterday, close to 120,000 refugees had returned. Despite the agreement between INTERFET and the Indonesian forces, which was reached on 22 November under the auspices of Ambassador Holbrooke, there has been no significant increase in the rate of return. Several factors, I think, may account for this; one of them is continued intimidation and misinforming of refugees in West Timor by militias; another is the lack of infrastructure, aggravated by the rainy season, which may be acting as a deterrent. In addition, there are indications that the number of refugees still in West Timor do not foresee, for various reasons, or do not wish, for various reasons, to return in the immediate future to East Timor.

Relations between UNTAET and the East Timorese are very good. UNTAET is administering East Timor in accordance with Security Council resolution 1272 (1999), in close cooperation and consultation with the Timorese, as envisaged under that resolution. To this end, UNTAET has established the National Consultative Commission of East Timor, which will be the primary mechanism for cooperation with the East Timorese. The Commission is chaired by Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, the Secretary-General's Special Representative and Transitional Administrator, and will be composed of 15 members. Seven of them are designated by the Council of National Resistance of East Timor (CNRT), a broad coalition that favoured independence; Mr. Jose Alexandre Gusmão, also known as Xanana Gusmão, and Mr. Jose Ramos Horta, who returned to East Timor on 1 December after 24 years in exile, are the acknowledged leaders of the CNRT. Three members of the Commission are designated by political parties that supported autonomy and one by the Catholic Church, and four will represent UNTAET.

The first meeting of the National Consultative Commission was held on 11 December, and the next meeting is scheduled to take place on 28 or 29 December. The Council will create sectoral committees that will comprise East Timorese and international experts. Members of the Consultative Commission attended the donor conference in Tokyo as part of the United Nations delegation, including Mr. Xanana Gusmão, who addressed that meeting.

While two of the seats allocated to the pro-autonomy parties have yet to be filled, the fact that their participation was readily agreed to by the CNRT is a positive sign as regards prospects for national reconciliation. There have also been meetings between CNRT representatives and pro-autonomy groups abroad. Another positive development was the meeting on 12 December between Xanana Gusmão and Mr. João Tavares, a militia leader, and the subsequent announcement by the latter of the militia's disbandment.

The establishment of good relations between East Timor and Indonesia is also high on UNTAET's agenda. At the end of November, Mr. Gusmão visited Jakarta at the invitation of President Wahid. Mr. Gusmão was warmly welcomed by President Wahid and other senior Indonesian officials, who assured him of their determination to build friendly relations with East Timor. They also undertook to assist in a number of areas, including the release of all remaining East Timorese political prisoners, and I am happy to report that this has occurred since then.

Mr. Vieira de Mello also visited Jakarta earlier this month, where he met with President Wahid and other senior officials. They discussed, among other things, the establishment of an Indonesian representation in Dili, the resumption of flights between Indonesia and East Timor by Indonesian carriers and future commercial links and cooperation on banking and financial services. It was also agreed, subject to a decision by the Indonesian Cabinet, to constitute a working group with UNTAET participation, which is to work out measures to end militia harassment of East Timorese refugees still in West Timor. The Secretary-General has invited President Wahid to visit East Timor, and President Wahid has accepted and indicated that he will visit at an early opportunity.

Turning to governance and public administration, UNTAET has now established a skeleton administration in East Timor, including an effective presence in each of the 13 districts of East Timor. The immediate priorities for the administration are the restoration of essential infrastructure, the provision of basic social services, the recruitment of civil servants and the revival of commerce and trade. A total of 275 civilian police are deployed throughout the territory, and UNTAET is making every effort to begin the training of Timorese police by the beginning of February.

INTERFET, together with United Nations police, continues to uncover the bodies of persons who were killed during the period leading up to and after the ballot

on 30 August. Steps have been taken to record and secure the evidence for further investigation once the requisite expertise and facilities are available. The United Nations is working with several Governments that have offered assistance. The Special Rapporteurs on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions and on the question of torture and violence against women visited East Timor from 4 to 10 November. The international commission of inquiry established by the Commission on Human Rights visited East Timor from 25 November to 8 December. Both groups are expected to report to the General Assembly in the near future.

I wish to acknowledge with appreciation the assistance of those Governments which have given us the names of experts for the broad range of functions that UNTAET has to carry out in East Timor. However, there are still significant gaps in the staffing of UNTAET, particularly in the fields of labour and social affairs. We are also searching for an appropriate official to serve as the ombudsperson.

UNTAET will be working with the East Timorese civil servants, whose recruitment will begin in the near future. The Timorese have agreed that the civil service, which used to be subsidized from Jakarta, should be much reduced to a size that East Timor can afford and can itself sustain once UNTAET leaves. UNTAET is in the process of setting up a commission, composed mainly of East Timorese, to deal with the appointment of civil servants and to determine salaries and other conditions of employment.

The President: I thank Mr. Annabi for his comprehensive briefing.

Mr. Buallay (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): The question of East Timor has proved to what extent success can be found in reaching a solution to a problem, however large, with the cooperation of the parties concerned and the assistance of the United Nations.

It is certainly true that this large operation would not have succeeded without the genuine will shown by Indonesia to reach a solution, a will later translated into recommitment to the agreements it has entered into. We should also like to pay tribute to Portugal for the efforts it made in the process.

Rebuilding East Timor economically and administratively is of utmost importance. Such rebuilding cannot be separated, under any circumstances, from national reconciliation and the building of good relations between East Timor and its neighbours, in particular with Indonesia. Such a relationship must be based on cooperation and on setting the past aside and looking to the future.

Among the tasks to be undertaken by the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor is the increasing and coordinating of assistance to displaced persons and returnees. In this regard, greater support should be provided by donor countries, and we are pleased to note the positive results of the pledging conference held recently in Tokyo. Financial pledges made at that conference will help the United Nations in its work in East Timor.

We would also like to express our satisfaction at the means used to ensure the safe return of refugees to their homes in East Timor. In this regard, we would like to convey our gratitude and appreciation to the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor, under the leadership of Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for East Timor, for its efforts. We wish it every success in transforming the International Force, East Timor (INTERFET), from a multinational force to a United Nations peacekeeping operation.

Ms. Soderberg (United States of America): First I wish to commend you, Mr. President, for holding this open session today. Quite often when crises fall from the front pages of the newspapers, the Council's attention can get swayed to other crises, and I think, particularly with respect to East Timor, that it is crucial that the international community remain engaged. I also appreciate the update from Assistant Secretary-General Annabi.

I think that overall one would have to say that great progress has been made over the last year, starting with the United Nations leadership in organizing the consultation, the international community's mobilization to ameliorate the circumstances following the disturbances that occurred in the wake of the consultation, and the swift move of both the multinational Force, led by the Australians, and the United Nations leadership.

I think that overall the United Nations operations and the multinational Force are going well and are working quite well in a unique arrangement. I think one must give due credit to the very stellar leadership of the

Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello. He has displayed command and control and laudatory leadership in what is a very difficult situation on the ground, and I think he deserves the applause and credit of this body.

There has been substantial progress on the ground, due in large part to the leaders on the ground in East Timor but also to the very direct engagement of the international community. I would like to welcome in particular Mr. Gusmão's meeting with the former pro-integrationists as well as the militia's subsequent decision to lay down its weapons. I think that these are both significant developments that will help to stabilize the situation on the ground.

The transition to the Blue Helmets will occur early next year, as Mr. Annabi told us in his briefing, and I think all indications are that that will go quite well. We are also quite pleased with the results of the Tokyo pledging conference. To date the United States has provided $34.9 million to the international humanitarian effort, and we have also provided $30 million to the United Nations appeal to assist refugees and displaced persons. The United States also hopes to provide additional assistance in development and capacity-building for the people of East Timor, as well as assistance to small farmers.

It is important, I think, that the United States remain an active partner with East Timor and with the international community and other donors, and that it remain engaged in the ongoing reconstruction efforts. That said, there are concerns that we continue to have about the situation on the ground. Certainly we are deeply troubled by the information provided by Mr. Annabi about the failure to achieve an increase in the return of the inhabitants of East Timor. We certainly had hoped that that would move forward in a more timely fashion, and this is something that the United Nations and the international community must keep as a priority. We also believe that it is time for the Government of Indonesia to resettle from the camps those East Timorese who opt to remain primarily in Indonesia.

We certainly look forward to reading the report of the international commission of inquiry. I think it is important to support that Commission as well as the Indonesian commission of inquiry, and that their investigations bring out the facts of what happened in the violence that took place in East Timor.

The need for accurate information about conditions in East Timor is crucial, as is complete and safe access by international workers. I believe that it is important that the facts come out in this case, not just on the conditions but also with respect to any additional evidence of the killings that have occurred in East Timor. I think that certainly we would all want those responsible to be held accountable for this.

Lastly, I think the international community has made an enormous investment in East Timor, and with continued leadership and international engagement, the people of East Timor will be assured of a secure, peaceful and prosperous future.

Mr. Fowler (Canada): I would like to begin by thanking Mr. Annabi for yet another excellent and comprehensive briefing and by extending Canada's appreciation to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, and all the men and women of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) and the International Force, East Timor (INTERFET), as well as those involved in the delivery of humanitarian assistance in both East and West Timor. As a result of their coordinated efforts to date, as well as the efforts of the East Timorese themselves, East Timor has made truly remarkable progress.

We are now beginning to move beyond the most pressing security challenges to the challenges of post-conflict reintegration, reconstruction and development. However, the plight of those still in West Timor remains a source of serious concern to us. There are persistent reports that pro-autonomy militias continue to intimidate refugees in camps in West Timor and are hindering their return, including through the use of an active disinformation campaign. We therefore urge the Government of Indonesia to take further steps to address the situation so as to ensure that all displaced persons who wish to return can do so in safety and in dignity.

In this regard we welcome the agreement reached between Mr. de Mello and the Indonesian Minister of Defence to establish a joint working group. We anticipate that this group will move urgently to address the concerns of the displaced and facilitate their early return and resettlement.

Mr. de Mello's efforts to streamline UNTAET and to improve coordination and consultation with the people of East Timor are especially welcome. We are pleased to

note that the early tension which marked UNTAET's relationship with the National Council for East Timorese Resistance (CNRT) appears to have been resolved. The establishment of the National Consultative Commission should help to engage the East Timorese more fully in the process of transition and administration and, of course, will help to foster indigenous capacity for self-governance.

We understand that, while plans have not yet been finalized, the transition from INTERFET to UNTAET should begin in mid-January 2000 and should end by 28 February. As we have stated repeatedly, this mission could have been and should have been a United Nations peacekeeping operation from the beginning, and I am pleased therefore that our Canadian soldiers will wear blue helmets before they leave at the end of March.

Once established, a peacekeeping operation commanded and funded by the United Nations will increase the regional legitimacy of the force and will attract greater Asian participation. It will also relieve the financial burden assumed by those that have contributed to INTERFET. Sharing such a burden among the wider international community is the essence of our collective security arrangements, which we believe underpin this Organization.

I do not know whether other members of the Council will be fully aware of the extent of the enormous financial contribution which the Government and the people of Australia have made, on behalf of us all, to this mission, or of the fact that, in order to pay for the operation, a special and significant tax has been levied on all Australians above a certain income level. While this extraordinary generosity on the part of the Government and the people of Australia is deeply appreciated — and it is certainly admired by my Government — this is not the way the United Nations was supposed to operate.

The establishment of a rapidly deployable headquarters would, of course, have contributed enormously to the goal of deploying this and other United Nations peacekeeping missions more quickly and more effectively; we regret extremely that progress on this front within the Secretariat has been so very marginal.

Canada fully supports the efforts of the international commission of inquiry, as well as those of the Indonesian National Commission on Human Rights. Anyone found responsible for human rights violations should, of course, be brought to justice. We understand that the commission of inquiry should be submitting its report soon, and we hope that the commission of inquiry and the Indonesian National Commission on Human Rights will continue to cooperate and to share information in order to increase the effectiveness and credibility of their respective findings.

Mr. Fonseca (Brazil): Thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open meeting on East Timor. We are grateful also to Mr. Annabi for his comprehensive briefing.

At the outset, my delegation would like to speak a word of praise for the personnel of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) and of the International Force, East Timor (INTERFET), for the excellent work they are doing.

In April of this year the Brazilian delegation asked the Secretary-General to brief the Security Council on the incidents that had taken place in Dili on the preceding weekend. That request for information marked the reactivation of an item that had been dormant in the agenda of the Council. That was only the beginning of the final chapter of a long and painful process in the direction of self-determination for East Timor. The Security Council utilized all instruments available, including the highly successful mission led by Ambassador Andjaba. East Timor is an important source of lessons for the Council in its future action.

The Brazilian people have always fully supported the goal of an independent East Timor. In April, however, we did not suspect that so much suffering was still to come.

Today's briefing marks the start of the reconstruction of East Timor. The very positive response by the international community to the donors conference held in Tokyo last week surpassed our best expectations. We understand that much of the resources pledged at that conference are still dependent on legislative approval and are to be disbursed over a three-year period. We hope that the commitments undertaken in Tokyo will be secured.

Brazil commends Japan and Portugal for their generosity. Brazil is going to make a modest contribution to the trust fund, and is ready to support East Timor in training human resources as well as through the provision of technical cooperation. In that context I note that Ambassador Roque Rodrigues, Chef de cabinet of

Mr. Xanana Gusmão, is visiting Brazil and has been received by our highest authorities.

The Tokyo meeting highlighted the good results that fluid cooperation among Member States, the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions can yield. Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello and Mr. Jean-Michel Severino, the World Bank's Vice-President, East Asia and Pacific Region, deserve our applause for their leadership in steering the meeting. That kind of leadership will be necessary in the coming task of promoting post-conflict peace-building and national healing. The reconstruction of the physical infrastructure will have to be matched with a political effort for further reconciliation in the transition to independence.

Brazil considers that the National Council for East Timorese Resistance (CNRT) has a very important role in that regard. We are encouraged by the actions of the CNRT leadership, such as the meeting held in Singapore at the beginning of the month between CNRT officials and former pro-integration politicians, which translated into deeds the aspiration expressed by Xanana Gusmão while in prison to unite the East Timorese. That attitude of forgiveness should not prevent the implementation of a thorough investigation to establish responsibility for the violence that was unleashed upon the East Timorese.

We still have security problems, as Mr. Annabi clearly indicated. We have learned that some of the so-called militias have been dissolved. But others continue to prevent internally displaced persons from returning to East Timor. It is necessary to create the conditions for their return.

With the support of the international community, UNTAET will assist in the building of democratic institutions in East Timor and in the economic rehabilitation of the territory.

Brazil's present term on the Security Council will end in a few days. We will continue to work to support the Council and the United Nations in the fulfilment of their responsibilities with regard to East Timor. After independence, when UNTAET will have left the country, the United Nations will continue to have a role in assisting the Timorese people to build a prosperous and democratic country.

Mr. Granovsky (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We too express our gratitude to the Assistant Secretary-General, Mr. Annabi, for his comprehensive briefing.

We note with satisfaction the recent positive trend in the situation in East Timor, which is reflected in Australia's fifth periodic report on the operations of the International Force, East Timor (INTERFET) (S/1999/1248, annex). That report speaks of good prospects for achieving security and indicates that the threat posed by militias has essentially been eliminated. In that connection I should like to emphasize the importance of a well-planned transition from INTERFET to a United Nations peacekeeping operation, which will be the objective of a comprehensive transition plan.

East Timor faces a multitude of tasks, dealing with which will require support from the international community and the active involvement of the East Timorese themselves. Exceptionally important in that connection is the establishment of a mechanism for consultation with the inhabitants of the territory, of institutions of self-government and of other institutions of civil society.

Needless to say, the situation in East Timor is not free of problems, as we can see from the note by the Secretary-General of 10 December 1999 on the situation of human rights in East Timor (A/54/660) and from media reports of the recent discovery of mass graves in the territory. There is also the urgent issue of temporarily displaced persons.

Nonetheless, progress towards normalization in East Timor is evident. We are convinced that a climate conducive to this has been created largely thanks to United Nations staff, first and foremost the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello.

In conclusion, I must reaffirm that Russia intends to participate in the activities of the various components of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor.

Mr. Chen Xu (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): First, we want to thank Assistant Secretary-General Annabi for his briefing. The Chinese delegation is very gratified by the continued stability of the situation of East Timor. We are very happy to note that the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) is being smoothly deployed, and we pay tribute to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Vieira de

Mello, and his staff for having done a tremendous amount of work in extremely difficult conditions on the ground.

It is our consistent view that the United Nations presence in East Timor is for the purpose of helping the East Timorese realize independence and self-reliance. The principle that this depends mainly on the East Timorese themselves should be maintained, and, to the extent possible, more local people should be brought into this process and encouraged to play a positive role. Therefore, we fully support the work of the Consultative Commission of East Timor, which, in our view, is a good way to allow the local people to participate in the decision-making process. We welcome the positive result of the donor conference held in Tokyo, which we believe will facilitate the laying of a solid financial foundation for East Timor's transition to independence. Only when reconciliation has been realized can peace and independence be possible in East Timor. We have taken note of the fact that Mr. Gusmão has indicated his commitment to work for conciliation among all parties, particularly between the pro-integration party and the pro-independence party. He has also indicated that he is willing to fully cooperate with UNTAET. We acknowledge this with deep appreciation.

We hope that the International Force, East Timor, will soon be turned into a United Nations peacekeeping operation, and in this regard, the Secretariat should accelerate the relevant preparatory work. We also hope that the composition of the peacekeeping force will be more balanced.

To conclude, China supports the work of UNTAET and will continue to provide personnel and financial help within its capabilities.

Mr. Türk (Slovenia): Mr. President, I wish to begin by expressing our appreciation to you for enabling the Security Council to consider the recent developments in East Timor in the present format. We believe that an open briefing is most suitable, since the issue of East Timor has been receiving serious attention, not just from Security Council members, but also from many other United Nations Member States present today.

I wish to make a few brief remarks concerning the major issues referred to in the briefing by the Assistant Secretary-General, Mr. Hédi Annabi, who briefed us with his usual sense of comprehensiveness and lucidity, and I thank him for the briefing. The donor conference in Tokyo was an extremely important event. It was aimed at raising funds to help rebuild East Timor and ended with over $500 million in pledges. We wish to express our appreciation for the generous attitude of many donors, which testifies to their true commitment to address the urgent and long-term needs of East Timor. We would particularly like to stress the fact that this was achieved in close and coordinated partnership among the world financial institutions, the United Nations and the East Timorese.

From among the political and factual problems on the ground, we consider the problem of the safe and timely return of refugees to be of paramount importance. We note with satisfaction the agreement on establishing a joint border commission, brokered by Ambassador Holbrooke during his visit last month to the region, which addresses the problem of the return of refugees.

But the picture presented by Mr. Annabi today remains bleak. Clearly, further efforts are needed. In that context, we wish to lend our full support to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and others present on the ground in the effort to assure the return of refugees in safety and dignity.

We would like to express our appreciation to Australia, as the leading nation, for the periodic reports on the operations of the International Force, East Timor (INTERFET), and we emphasize the importance of the lead taken by the regional States in that operation. We commend INTERFET for the effective implementation of its responsibilities under the Security Council resolution. We are hopeful for INTERFET's early transition to a fully-fledged peacekeeping operation. We are confident that a period of transition from INTERFET to the United Nations peacekeeping force will be carefully managed so as to ensure continuity during that period. We believe that the remarks and explanations provided to us by Mr. Annabi today were extremely reassuring in that regard.

Given the scope and nature of the violations of human rights and humanitarian law that have taken place in East Timor, Slovenia has all along supported the need for investigations into crimes and into the efficient delivery of justice. We believe that full reconciliation and a new, prosperous future for East Timor will be possible only if built on a platform of justice, equality and the rule of law. In this context, we welcome the recent report on the joint mission to East Timor undertaken by the three Special Rapporteurs, in accordance with the Commission on Human Rights resolution of 27 September 1999. We note the recommendations made in that recently published

report. We look forward to the report by the commission of inquiry, which is due at the end of this month.

Another important element in rebuilding East Timor is the reconciliation process, which is essential for achieving stable conditions for sustainable development. We strongly hope that the next round of reconciliation talks will make further progress in this area.

We would like to emphasize the strong commitment and interest of the East Timorese themselves in constructively contributing to all aspects of shaping their common future. In that context, we welcome the establishment of the National Consultative Commission as the essential instrument for the meaningful participation of East Timorese in decision-making and for strengthening the independence process of East Timor.

Finally, we would like to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General, his Special Representative, Mr. Vieira de Mello and all others participating in the effort to bring peace and post-conflict reconstruction in East Timor.

Mr. Dejammet (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to join those who have expressed their gratitude to you, Mr. President, for having organized this discussion. I would also like to thank Mr. Annabi for the information he has given us, which enables us to make an up to date appraisal of the situation in East Timor.

The information is generally positive, and this is obviously a source of satisfaction for the members of the Security Council. Ambassador Fonseca has rightly recalled that it was Brazil that, in April, began alerting Council members to the evolution of the situation. I think, in hindsight, we can see that the past months have for once given us an example of effective and positive action by the Security Council. The credit goes to one of the members of the Council, Brazil, and obviously to the effective action taken by Portugal, and then, through the crisis of doubt in September, to the efforts of successive Presidents of the Security Council — all of this, I think, should be recalled.

Today the indications regarding the functioning of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET), I repeat, lead us to be rather optimistic. All of this no doubt is attributable to the clear-cut objectives of the Special Representative, in particular his emphasis on the idea of national reconciliation. I believe that when a senior official of the United Nations shows such a commitment, when he engages the efforts of the entire fine staff he has been able to put together, positive results are guaranteed.

Thus, we are seeing meetings between militia chiefs who were considered opposed to independence and the current leaders of the Timorese pro-independence movement. We are seeing such meetings being organized, we are seeing institutions of all sorts established, including both administrative and judicial institutions. We are seeing the achievement of national pacification and reconciliation, a goal of United Nations missions, both here and in other situations throughout the world. I believe that given these developments a most sincere tribute should be paid to Mr. Vieira de Mello and to the team he has put together.

Positive results can already be seen. I believe one such positive result was already seen at the donors meeting. The international community is witnessing an undertaking that is succeeding, and it is responding generously to the appeals that are being made. The donors conference that was held recently in Tokyo produced results that exceeded expectations.

This is clearly for the good, and I also believe that here for once we can make a comparison between the situation in this Asian region and what is happening in Europe. People often talk about a double standard, a disproportionality between what is done for Europe and what is done for the rest of the world. I believe that what we should bear in mind is the generosity that has been shown as regards Timor, assistance that has come not only from the European Union but also in the form of bilateral aid from a number of countries of the region — I am thinking of Japan, of Australia, of Thailand; in fact, I am thinking about almost all the countries of Asia, which have responded to the appeal with most generous bilateral assistance. I would hope that such generosity could also be shown as regards another region, Kosovo, which certainly has need of financial support from the international community if we wish to give the United Nations Mission there the same chance of succeeding as that of the current mission in Timor.

Positive results are also being seen in the return of refugees, although we are aware that there are still several tens of thousands of refugees who have not been able to return. In this regard, I would like to ask Mr. Annabi if these statistics can be explained either by the fact that refugees are of their own will refusing to return or by other reasons. In spite of the security conditions in East Timor, in spite of the will to achieve

national reconciliation that has been confirmed by UNTAET and by the Timorese leaders who have come together around Mr. Vieira de Mello — in spite of all this positive news, are there some refugees who are of their own will refusing to return to East Timor, or is it because of logistical problems, the conditions of roads, transportation problems, and so forth.

The second positive piece of information is clearly the rapid transformation of an operation that in the beginning was authorized by the Security Council, but of an intergovernmental nature, into a United Nations peacekeeping operation. In this regard, I must note my complete endorsement of the ideas so forcefully presented by the Canadian representative. He was without doubt correct in stressing that this operation must be a United Nations operation.

As in this case, the reality is often that in order to act rapidly we are sometimes led to use the formula of giving Security Council authorization for a multinational force. In this case Australia is deserving of the praise it has received for taking the principal responsibility for the burden of this operation and for assuming the costs that have already been rightly noted by Ambassador Fowler. Again, this is explained by the urgency of the situation and by the need to act quickly. This has not been our only experience with such a case. We have seen similar cases in Africa, as well as in Europe, with operation Alba.

Nonetheless, the members of the Security Council who emphasize that our objective should be the deployment of a genuine United Nations operation with obligatory financing are right. This is why I, like Ambassador Fowler, can only be pleased that in the very near future the transformation of the mission in East Timor will take place and that we are going to undertake a peacekeeping operation.

The only question that I would like to pose to Mr. Annabi in this regard is whether the high figure that has been projected — more than 8,000 men just for this operation, with all the costs entailed — is it possible that at some future date this figure could realistically be reduced, while ensuring, of course, that the security conditions are maintained.

Here again, we have a situation that seems to be progressing satisfactorily on the ground. Bearing in mind the importance of maintaining the processes under way to promote human rights, which are linked to the strengthening of national reconciliation, is it not possible that the size of the military part of the operation could be reduced? It is up to the Secretariat to provide us information in this regard.

I repeat, the total cost of the operation is large. It is perfectly justified. It is producing positive results. Let us keep this in mind when we consider the situation in Kosovo, where the international community's financial involvement is, unfortunately, not so great.

Mr. Petrella (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank Mr. Annabi. From the information he has provided and from the latest report of the International Force, East Timor (INTERFET), we note with satisfaction that the situation in East Timor has improved markedly. We commend the International Force and all the participating countries for the excellent job they are doing. In particular, I would like to mention the work being done with such dedication and professionalism by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET), Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello. His arrival in the territory last November gave a great boost to the expansion of UNTAET and to the planning of a true peacekeeping operation.

As regards security, we are glad to see that at present there are no significant threats to peace and that during recent weeks there have been no significant incidents. This is essential for the return of displaced persons, for the reduction of the forces of INTERFET and for the success of UNTAET in general.

We think it is very positive that, in the area of border management, the Indonesian authorities and INTERFET are maintaining cooperative relations on the basis of the memorandum of technical understanding signed on 22 November.

We are grateful to the Philippines and Australia for having provided military staff for this operation.

We are concerned by the humanitarian situation, in particular the serious problem of refugees in West Timor and elsewhere in Indonesia who need to return to East Timor. Over 110,000 have already done so, but much remains to be done. In this regard, it is essential, through INTERFET and the military component of UNTAET that is to replace it, to ensure the safety of humanitarian personnel. The Office of the United Nations High

Commissioner for Refugees should also have access to all refugee camps.

We are concerned about the apparent ongoing intimidation of refugees by the militia to prevent their return. However, the meeting of Mr. Gusmão with the militia leaders would seem to indicate that the intimidation will cease.

Finally, we wish to express our satisfaction with the success of the meeting of donors held in Tokyo last week. The high level of response, exceeding $500 million, is clear manifestation of the international community's support for East Timor.

Mr. Kamal (Malaysia): First and foremost, my delegation would like to commend you, Sir, for holding the open briefing on the situation in East Timor this morning. This is very much in line with our consistent position calling for more transparency in the work of the Council, particularly as the issue is of great interest to many Members of this Organization.

We would like to thank Mr. Annabi for his very comprehensive and yet succinct briefing this morning. We note with satisfaction the relative calm and stable situation in East Timor, which we hope will be conducive to the reconciliation efforts that are being undertaken among the East Timorese. In this regard, we welcome the recent meeting between Mr. Gusmão and the pro-autonomy leaders, particularly with Mr. João da Silva Tavares, and the subsequent announcement of the formal dissolution of the militia organization and the hand-over of weapons to the Indonesian army.

It is our firm belief that all East Timorese, of any political backgrounds and persuasion whatsoever, have a place in the future independent East Timor. We therefore urge the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) to assist further, in close consultation with the East Timorese leadership, towards a successful process of reconciliation among them.

We were also gratified to hear from Mr. Annabi of the good relations that have existed between the Government of Indonesia and the East Timorese, particularly when he mentioned the recent visit of Mr. Gusmão to Jakarta, where he was warmly welcomed by President Abdurrahman Wahid of Indonesia. The other developments he mentioned — the release of the East Timorese political prisoners, the proposed opening of Indonesian representation in Dili, the resumption of lighting, the future commercial bank and the intention of Abdurrahman Wahid to visit East Timor — are all very positive and we welcome them.

In this regard, as my delegation has stated before in Council debate, in shaping the future of East Timor, due recognition should be given to the unique roles that Indonesia and Portugal have played in the context of history and, in the case of Indonesia, also in the geopolitical context. It is important that the future East Timor Government come to terms with this reality and begin the process of forging constructive and mutually beneficial relationships with them, especially with its important neighbour. We believe that this relationship is also the wish and desire of both countries, particularly Indonesia, which is physically inseparable from East Timor, with which it shares land and sea boundaries. UNTAET can assist in laying the groundwork for such cooperation.

We hope that all the refugees will be repatriated as soon as possible to their homes and given assistance to rebuild their lives. In this regard, we welcome and commend the cooperation and commitment of the Government of Indonesia to International Force, East Timor (INTERFET) and the United Nations, culminating in the signing of the memorandum of technical understanding on border management, which represents a positive step forward in managing the border regions and signals a new level of cooperation between the Indonesian Government, INTERFET and UNTAET. Even more, we are of the view that it will help to ensure the safe and secure return of displaced persons to East Timor.

We also wish to commend all the donor countries that participated in and contributed to the recent successful donors meeting in Tokyo recently. This is indeed testimony to the acute concern and support of the international community for the East Timorese people in the preparations for their independence in the near future.

In conclusion, as a regional neighbour, Malaysia looks forward to a future independent East Timor's playing a full and constructive role in regional affairs and to its integration with the region.

Mr. Jagne (Gambia): My delegation would like to thank you, Sir, for convening this meeting in this format. We are also grateful to Mr. Annabi for his important and useful briefing.

Since the announcement of the results of the popular consultation, the United Nations, together with the Governments concerned, has made enormous progress in seeing to it that the wish of the East Timorese people for an independent East Timor is being implemented. My delegation would therefore pay tribute, in particular, to the Government of Indonesia for its vital cooperation throughout this period, without which we would not have reached the point where we are today.

We would also like to pay a special tribute to Australia and the countries which have contributed troops to the International Force, East Timor (INTERFET). Without their timely intervention, the situation in East Timor would have been something else altogether.

My delegation is glad to note that the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) has now been established and its military observers deployed. We note with satisfaction that international staff of the United Nations are arriving in East Timor and starting their work. My delegation welcomes the appointment of Sergio Vieira de Mello as the Secretary-General's Special Representative and transitional administrator for East Timor. There could not have been a better choice.

We were heartened to learn that relations between UNTAET and the East Timorese are very good. This augured well for the donor conference, reported to have been very successful. We join others in thanking the Government of Japan for its preponderant role, as both host and donor, in making it a resounding success.

It is also pleasing to note that UNTAET has established a skeleton administration. The Government of the Gambia has contributed a sizable number of civilian police and is ready to contribute more. We are also willing to provide civil servants to work with UNTAET.

My delegation also notes with satisfaction the laudable efforts being made by President Wahid and Mr. Gusmão to place East Timorese-Indonesian relations on a firm footing. We hope that the international community will continue to support these commendable initiatives.

Finally, we have every reason to believe that, apart from the problems associated with the lack of infrastructure and the fate of the large number of refugees still in West Timor, the future of East Timor is very promising indeed. The Ambassador of France made reference to the generosity of the donor community regarding East Timor and wished that the same degree of generosity was extended to other regions. My delegation cannot agree more with him that by demonstrating the same zeal, the same resolve, the same degree of enthusiasm and the same degree of generosity we would succeed as a community of nations in making this small planet that we all share a much better place for present and future generations and would assure all our children and their children's children a bright, bright future.

Mr. Andjaba (Namibia): Mr. President, I thank you for organizing this open briefing. I want to take this opportunity also to thank Mr. Annabi for the comprehensive briefing on the situation in East Timor.

My delegation is gratified by the progress being made with the establishment of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) and is pleased that its deployment remains on schedule. We regard this as important to ensure that the transition from the International Force, East Timor (INTERFET) to a United Nations peacekeeping operation takes place as soon as possible. In this regard, we pay a special tribute to Mr. Vieira de Mello and his staff for the efforts they are making under difficult conditions.

With regard to the security situation, my delegation is glad to note from the briefing and the latest INTERFET report that there are no significant threats to peace and security in East Timor. Thanks in particular to the clamp-down on militia activities and the negotiation efforts, we trust that situation will further improve. In this connection, we commend the leadership provided by Australia, and we thank all the countries that have provided troops and contributed to the work of INTERFET.

A less positive aspect is our concern about the continuation of intimidation by militias in West Timor, which hampers the repatriation of refugees. We welcome the undertaking by Mr. Tavares to disband his militia group and hope that the repatriation rate will now increase. At the same time, we are convinced that the prosecution of captured militia members under a new judicial system could further serve as a deterrent for other criminal militia activities.

I also want to take this opportunity to commend the efforts of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to, *inter alia*, inform the refugees about repatriation conditions in East Timor. These methods are crucial in the process of

restoring refugee confidence and in order to counter militia propaganda.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend my colleague, Ambassador Holbrooke, who is not here with us today, for the success achieved during his recent visit to East Timor. Ambassador Holbrooke's visit had a very positive impact on the plight of the refugees in West Timor, as he managed to attract more attention to their situation, which in turn resulted in more concrete steps being taken with regard to them.

We also welcome the establishment of relations between the leaders in East Timor and in Indonesia, and the visit by Mr. Gusmão to Jakarta at the invitation of the President of Indonesia is very much welcomed. These efforts must be supported by the international community.

Last but not least, my delegation welcomes the excellent response by the international aid donors in Tokyo, who pledged more than the amount estimated by the World Bank for East Timor's reconstruction. We hope that these pledges will turn into reality to fund reconstruction and humanitarian efforts in that ravaged country over the next few years.

I would also like to echo the sentiments expressed by Ambassador Dejammet with regard to the need for increased donor response to other situations in other parts of the world.

Mr. Eboumy (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): My delegation also wishes to thank the presidency for having convened this briefing and Mr. Annabi for the very useful information he has provided us.

On 30 August 1999, in the popular consultation held throughout the territory, the East Timorese people spoke out in favour of a transition to independence. Last November the People's Consultative Assembly of Indonesia ratified the result of that referendum. Today, as a result of this positive evolution, and also as a result of our actions, including Security Council resolution 1272 (1999) of 25 October 1999, East Timor has a Transitional Administration entrusted with a complex and well-defined mandate to move the country towards self-government. Supported by the International Force, East Timor (INTERFET), we are confident that the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) will be able to fulfil its task successfully. However, it should be noted that the financial and material support of the international community, including that of the international financial institutions, remains necessary if the UNTAET mandate is to be successful. In this regard, we welcome the pledges recently made in Tokyo.

Now, when East Timor is ready to stand independently, there are many challenges to overcome, particularly those related to reconstruction and development. However, working together, the Timorese people will be able to achieve their objectives. In this connection, we encourage all refugees and displaced persons to return to their towns and villages so that they can participate in the building of new institutions and in the reconstruction of their future country.

Regarding the militias that continue to intimidate and disseminate misinformation, we ask them to accept the new circumstances. We wish to remind them that continuous flagrant violations of human rights and international humanitarian law will not go unpunished. Furthermore, we are confident that the cooperation of all will be helpful to shed light on the cases of grave violations of human rights that took place immediately after the popular consultation.

We wish to pay a tribute to the members of the International Force, East Timor, the personnel of the humanitarian organizations and the personnel of the United Nations, in particular Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for their courage and perseverance in working in such a difficult environment and context.

In conclusion, we trust that the administration of East Timor will plan to establish friendly and normal relations with all its neighbours, in particular with Indonesia.

Mr. van Walsum (Netherlands): We thank you, Mr. President, for calling this open meeting and Mr. Annabi for his briefing.

Circumstances have changed considerably and very much for the better since the last time the Council had an open debate on the subject of East Timor, which was on 11 September 1999. The new situation is also reflected in the fact that the General Assembly has decided to drop the item on the question of Timor from its agenda and include a new item on the agenda of the fifty-fifth session, entitled "The situation in East Timor during its transition to independence".

The Netherlands wishes to pay tribute to the countries participating in the multinational Force — the International Force, East Timor (INTERFET) — which has been essential in establishing a safe and secure environment, without which the current process of reconstruction could not have begun. I would like to mention in particular the lead nation, Australia, and the participation of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries. They have demonstrated their will to take on responsibilities for security in their region. This, of course, is the region to which East Timor belongs.

The Netherlands is encouraged by the positive developments in the relationship between East Timor and Indonesia. We understand that President Wahid intends to visit East Timor on 17 January, and we consider this step of great importance.

Of course, despite the improvements of the past few months, it should be realized that the people of East Timor are only at the beginning of a long process of rehabilitating their economy and society and building the institutions of a modern democratic State in which the rule of law prevails. As members of the Security Council have repeatedly stressed, the international community has a duty to help the East Timorese on this difficult road.

The Netherlands notes with satisfaction that, through a variety of channels, both multilateral and bilateral, aid is being offered. Mr. Annabi reminded us that, at the donor conference in Tokyo last week, $522 million was pledged. The Government of the Netherlands will donate approximately $7.3 million to the United Nations consolidated inter-agency appeal for East Timor. An initial contribution has already been made to the trust fund for the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor. During the new fiscal year, a further $2.3 million will be made available to that fund. Money left over from our contribution of $220,000 to the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) trust fund can also be used for similar purposes under the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET). Finally, $1.8 million has been donated to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

The diversity and intensity of international aid is, of course, very satisfying. However, in a sense, there can also be too much aid. The local absorption capacity of East Timor has to be taken into account. We have to make sure that East Timor does not become permanently dependent on outside aid instead of independent.

Furthermore, as with every complex operation involving several aid organizations, there is also the risk of a lack of synergy of aid efforts. We would be interested in hearing the views of the Secretariat on these considerations, including its thoughts concerning division of labour and of competences among the organizations involved.

We welcome the emphasis in the Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly on the need for the international community to work in close consultation and liaison with the East Timorese themselves. The Netherlands, as well as other Council members, has made the same point on previous occasions, and we are therefore pleased to see that agreement has been reached on the establishment of a National Consultative Commission. The Secretary-General states in his report that, through this consultative mechanism, UNTAET will ensure that the needs and wishes of the East Timorese people are fully represented in the implementation of the transitional administration.

There is another issue to which the Secretary-General's report rightfully draws our attention: that those responsible for grave violations of human rights must be held accountable for their actions. Both international and Indonesian investigative activities are taking place. We would like to hear the Secretariat's views on the interrelationship between these activities. We have received the report on the joint mission to East Timor undertaken by the three Special Rapporteurs of the Commission on Human Rights, and we hope that the report of the United Nations Commission of Inquiry will also be presented as soon as possible.

These reports can constitute important steps in the process of East Timorese reconciliation. From the perspective of my own country, I must mention one particular instance of human rights violations, namely the murder in East Timor in September of the Dutch journalist Sander Thoenes. We understand that INTERFET has concluded its investigation into the matter and now expect its report to be made available to the Secretary-General without delay.

Finally, while we speak in positive terms about developments in East Timor, there are still tens of thousands of refugees stuck in camps in West Timor and elsewhere in Indonesia. Mr. Annabi mentioned that close to 120,000 refugees had returned. INTERFET, FRETILIN and the Indonesian armed forces (TNI) have agreed on arrangements for the safety of border

crossings. Can we conclude that the message that it is safe to return to East Timor has come through to the refugees and that the efforts to intimidate them into staying are now subsiding?

Mr. Annabi mentioned the following reasons why refugees might not return: misinformation, a lack of infrastructure in areas to which refugees wish to return, and the absence of a wish to return in the immediate future for a variety of reasons. My delegation would appreciate receiving more detailed information on this matter. We cannot simply conclude that the matter is complex because we are dealing with such a mixed bag of motives. Some of these reasons fall under the heading of logistics, but intentional disinformation comes close to intimidation, and intimidation comes close to force. To that extent, we are dealing with an unresolved political problem.

Precisely because the Indonesian Government has adopted such a positive attitude in so many respects, we feel the Council should remind it today that under resolution 1272 (1999) it continues to be responsible for the safe return of refugees.

The President: I shall now make a brief statement in my capacity as the representative of the United Kingdom.

The United Kingdom very much shares the consensus of views around this table about the progress that has been made in East Timor and endorses the tributes that have been paid to those responsible for that progress. We also share the continued concern, particularly about the plight of refugees, in East and West Timor, and about accountability for human rights abuses.

Let me just say a word about the Tokyo donor conference, the results of which we very much welcome. This was an important contribution to the reconstruction of East Timor and to its smooth transition to independence. It is all the more welcome because the United Nations and the World Bank do not always cooperate so well together.

The United Kingdom pledged some $20 million over the three-year period to come. Although that is rather less than our commitment, for instance, to Sierra Leone, it is still a substantial sum. The funds will be channelled to UNTAET and to the World Bank trust funds, according to evolving needs. We need to be certain that these funds are used to ensure a simple, flexible and sensitive approach to East Timor's requirements which is well coordinated by UNTAET and by the World Bank. Disjointed bilateral approaches would risk overwhelming East Timorese capacity, so we want to underline this need for proper coordination of the most welcome funding that is now available.

I resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I call on Mr. Annabi to respond to the comments and questions that have been raised.

Mr. Annabi: One set of questions related to the decrease in the rate of return of refugees from West Timor. As I said, we feel that this is due to a combination of factors. Some misinformation and intimidation is still going on, and that, of course, is one factor. According to the information we have, the fact that there has been extensive destruction in the territory and that some of the refugees are not sure that they will have a home to return to is possibly another factor. And finally, the third factor is probably the fact that those in West Timor who had voted in favour of autonomy — and let us not forget that more than 20 per cent of the East Timorese voted in favour of autonomy — may not wish to return to East Timor at the present time, or may not feel comfortable about doing so for one reason or another. One hundred twenty thousand have returned, and we may be reaching the point where some do not wish to return, at least in the immediate future.

We hope, however, that the working group whose establishment was agreed upon with the Indonesian authorities during the Special Representative's visit to Jakarta, and which will look at all these issues, can help improve the situation and enable us to move quickly towards a situation where we have more clarity as to the exact wishes and intentions of those who are left in West Timor, so that those who wish to return can indeed return in safe conditions and so that those who do not wish to return can be resettled elsewhere.

There was also a question by the representative of France regarding the strength of the United Nations peacekeeping force. We believe — and this is the assessment of all the experts concerned — that it is wise and prudent that the peacekeeping force taking over from the multinational force should be a strong, credible force, and that it should be endowed with a credible deterrent capacity. It will be smaller than the multinational force; when I visited East Timor at the end of November I was informed that the International Force, East Timor (INTERFET) had more than 11,000 troops in East

Timor. The United Nations force which will take over during February will have more than 8,000 troops.

But it is a fact that the security situation has improved, and we welcome this. We must, in this regard, pay tribute to INTERFET for the excellent work it has done to restore peace and security in the territory. If the present trend continues — and we have no reason to believe that it will not — certainly the Secretary-General will reassess the situation in due course and will not hesitate to come back to the Security Council with proposed reductions if he feels they can be safely undertaken. I can assure the Council that he will not wish to keep more troops in East Timor than are necessary to implement the mandate as foreseen in resolution 1272 (1999).

Finally, on coordination and division of labour regarding the implementation of the assistance that has been offered to East Timor, we have made an unusual effort to present to donors a comprehensive picture on the humanitarian assistance side, on requirements for administration and for creating a self-government capacity, and on longer-term reconstruction and development requirements. We have made an effort to present an integrated picture, and I can assure the Council that we will continue to do what we can to ensure proper coordination in the implementation of these programmes, to avoid, as much as we can, overlap and duplication among various agencies.

The President: I think it would be right on behalf of the whole Council to thank the Department of Peacekeeping Operations for its hard work on East Timor as part of the very considerable burden it is undertaking at the moment. I would also ask the Assistant Secretary-General please to convey to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in East Timor, Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, and to his team our warm appreciation for what they have achieved thus far in the interim administration.

There are no further speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.